WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communications system for transporting video data from a centralized location to an end user, the system comprising:

a network that transmits video data to a video cache at a local center located as close as possible to the end user;

a video cache at a local center capable of receiving video data from a centralized location;

a customer premises device capable of receiving the video data from the video cache; and

a stream manager that controls a video stream from a centralized location to a local center.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the network comprises any one or a combination of multiple packet based networks, wherein the network carries video data and control communications between the stream manager and the video cache

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the network comprises any packet based network, wherein the network carries video data, the system further comprising communication links, wherein the communication links carry control communications between the stream manager and the video cache.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the video cache at the local center is capable of receiving video data from the centralized location at a transmission speed somewhat faster than the speed at which the end user is capable of viewing the material.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the video cache at the local center is further capable of determining when a data packet has been corrupted or lost during transmission and signaling to the centralized storage location to retransmit the necessary data.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the video cache based at the customer premises is capable both of receiving video data from the video cache at the local center at a speed somewhat faster than the end user is capable of viewing the material and is capable of delaying the viewing of the video content for 3-30 seconds to allow for a buffer to be created.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the video cache based at the customer premises is further capable of determining when a data packet has been corrupted or lost during transmission and signaling to the video cache at the local center to retransmit the necessary data.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the video data may be previously stored, live or a combination of previously stored and live.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the stream manager is capable of determining whether video content stored at the central location is a candidate for archiving at the local center based upon:

available storage space in the local center video storage;

history of the content being previously accessed by end users served by that local center; and

history of similar content being previously accessed by end users served by that local center.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the stream manager is further capable of prioritizing the transmission of the various streams based on a combination of the following:

the type of video data;

the amount of video data remaining in the caches which require refreshing;

the speed at which the end user is viewing the video; and

the necessity to retransmit data due to corruption of video data and lost data packets.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the stream manager is further capable of determining the volume of video data being transmitted over the network and distributing the total volume of video data over multiple networks, including transmission over the public Internet.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the stream manager is further capable determining the instantaneous amount of bandwidth required to transmit the video information to each end user and staggering the transmission of high bandwidth instants with lower bandwidth instants in other video data streams to produce a smoother, aggregated stream.

13. A method of transporting video data from a centralized location to an end user, the method comprising:

transmitting, via a network, video data to a video cache at a local center located as close as possible to the end user;

receiving, at a video cache at a local center, video data from a centralized location;

receiving, at a customer premises device, the video data from the video cache; and

controlling, via a stream manager, a video stream from a centralized location to a local center.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the network comprises any one or a combination of multiple packet based networks, wherein the network carries video data and control communications between the stream manager and the video cache

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the network comprises any packet based network, wherein the network carries video data, the system further comprising communication links, wherein the communication links carry control communications between the stream manager and the video cache.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the video cache at the local center is capable of receiving video data from the centralized location at a transmission speed somewhat faster than the speed at which the end user is capable of viewing the material.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein the video cache at the local center is further capable of determining when a data packet has been corrupted or lost during transmission and signaling to the centralized storage location to retransmit the necessary data.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the video cache based at the customer premises is capable both of receiving video data from the video cache at the local center at a speed somewhat faster than the end user is capable of viewing the material and is capable of delaying the viewing of the video content for 3-30 seconds to allow for a buffer to be created.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the video cache based at the customer premises is further capable of determining when a data packet has been corrupted or lost during transmission and signaling to the video cache at the local center to retransmit the necessary data.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein the video data may be previously stored, live or a combination of previously stored and live.

21. The method of claim 13, wherein the stream manager is capable of determining whether video content stored at the central location is a candidate for archiving the local center based upon:

available storage space in the local center video storage;

history of the content being previously accessed by end users served by that local center; and

history of similar content being previously accessed by end users served by that local center.

22. The method of claim 13, wherein the stream manager is further capable of prioritizing the transmission of the various streams based on a combination of the following:

the type of video data;

the amount of video data remaining in the caches which require refreshing;

the speed at which the end user is viewing the video; and

the necessity to retransmit data due to corruption of video data and lost data packets.

23. The method of claim 13, wherein the stream manager is further capable of determining the volume of video data being transmitted over the network and distributing the total volume of video data over multiple networks, including transmission over the public Internet.

24. The method of claim 13, wherein the stream manager is further capable determining the instantaneous amount of bandwidth required to transmit the video information to each end user and staggering the transmission of high bandwidth instants with lower bandwidth instants in other video data streams to produce a smoother, aggregated stream.